

**T**HANNE seide I thus: I acorde me gretly to Plato, for thou remembrest & recordest me these things yit the secounde tyme; that is to seyn, first whan I loste my memorie by the contagious conjuncion of the body with the sowle; & eftsones afterward, whan I loste it, confounded by the charge and by the burdene of my sorwe.

**A**ND thanne seide she thus: yif thou loke, quod she, first the things that thou hast graunted, it ne shal nat ben right fer that thou ne shalt remembre thilke thing that thou seydest that thou nistest nat. What thing? quod I. By whiche government, quod she, that this world is governed. Me remembreth it wel, quod I; and I confesse wel that I ne wiste it naught. But albeit so that I see now from after what thou purposest, algates, I desire yit to herkene it of thee more pleyntly. Thou ne wendest nat, quod she, a litel herbiform, that men sholden doute that this world nis governed by God.

**C**ERTES, quod I, ne yit ne doute I it naught, ne I nel never wene that it were to doute; as who seith, but I wot wel that God governeth this world; & I shal shortly answeren thee by what resouns I am brought to this. This world, quod I, of so manye dyverse & contrarious parties, ne mighte never han ben assembled in o forme, but yif ther nere oon that conjoinede so manye dyverse things; and the same dyversitee of hir natures, that so discorden that oon fro that other, moste departen and unjoignen the things that ben conjoined, yif ther ne were oon that contenede that he hath conjoined and ybounde. Ne the certein ordre of nature ne sholde nat bringe forth so ordene moevinges, by places, by tymes, by doinges, by spaces, by qualitees, yif ther ne were oon that were ay stedefast dwellinge, that ordeynede and disponede these dyversitees of moevinges. And thilke thing, whatsoever it be, by which that alle things ben ymaked and ylad, I clepe him God; that is a word that is used to alle folk.

**T**HANNE seyde she: sin thou felest thus these things, quod she, I trowe that I have litel more to done that thou, mighty of welefulnesse, hool and sounde, ne see eftsones thy contree. But lat us loken the things that we han purpose herbiform. Have I nat noumbred and

seyd, quod she, that suffisaunce is in blisfulnesse, and we han acordet that God is thilke same blisfulnesse? **V**is, forsothe, quod I. And that, to governe this world, help fro withoute? For elles, yif he hadde nede of any help, he ne sholde nat have no ful suffisaunce? **V**is, thus it mot nedes be, quod I. Thanne ordeineth he by him self alone alle things? quod she. That shewed that God is the same good? **I**t remembreth me wel, quod I.

**T**HANNE ordeineth he alle things by thilke good, quod she; sin he, which that we han acordet to be good, governeth alle things by himself; and he is as a keye & a stee by which that the edifice of this world is ykept stable & withoute coroumping.

**A**CORDE me gretly, quod I; and I aperceiuede a litel herbiform that thou woldest seye thus; albeit so that it were by a thinne suspencion.

**T**ROWE it wel, quod she; for, as I trowe, thou ledest now more entently thyne eyen to loken the verray goodes. But natheles the thing that I shal telle thee yit ne sheweth nat lasse to loken.

**W**hat is that? quod I. **S**o as men trowen, quod she, and that rightfully, that God governeth alle things by the keye of his goodnesse, & alle these same things, as I have taught thee, hasten hem by naturel entencion to comen to good: ther may no man doute that they ne be governed voluntarily, and that they ne converten hem of hir owne wil to the wil of hir ordencour, as they that ben acordinge and enclynge to hir governour and hir king. **I**t mot nedes be so, quod I; for the raume ne sholde nat semen blisful yif ther were a yok of misdrawinges in dyverse parties; ne the sarringe of obedient things ne sholde nat be.

**T**Hanne is ther nothing, quod she, that kepeth his nature, that enforseth him to goon ayein God? **N**o, quod I. **A**ND yif that anything enforseth him to withstonde God, mighte it availen at the laste ayeins him, that we han graunted to ben almighty by the right of blisfulnesse? **C**ertes, quod I, aloutrely it ne mighte nat availen him. Thanne is ther nothing, quod she, that either wole or may withstonden to this sovereign good? **I** trowe nat, quod I. Thanne is thilke the sovereign good, quod she, that alle things governeth strongly, and ordeyneth hem softly.

**T**HANNE seyde I thus: I delyte me, quod I, nat only in the endes or in the somme of the resouns that thou hast

concluded and proeved, but thilke wordes that thou usest delyten me moche more; so, at the laste, foolles that sumtyme rengaigrete things oughten ben ashamed of themselves; that is to seyn, that we foolles that reprehenden wikkedly the things that touchen Goddes governaunce, we oughten ben ashamed of ourself: as I, that seyde that God refuseth only the werkes of men, and ne entremeteth nat of hem.

**H**OU hast wel herd, quod she, the fables of the poetes, how the giants assaileden the hevne with the goddes; but forsothe, the debonair force of God deposede hem, as it was worthy; that is to seyn, destroyed the githy; as it was worthy. But wilt thou that we joignen togider thilke same resouns? For praventure, of swich conjuncion may sterren up som fair sparkle of sooth.

**D**o, quod I, as thee liste. **W**enest thou, quod she, that God ne be almighty? **N**o, quod she, that I am in doute of it. **C**ertes, quod I, no man is in doute of it, yif he be in his minde. **B**ut the, quod she, that is almighty, ther nis nothing that he ne may. **T**hat is sooth, quod I. **M**ay God don yvel? quod she. **N**ay, forsothe, quod I. **T**hanne is yvel nothing, quod she, sin that he ne may nat don yvel that may don alle things.

**C**ORNEST thou me? quod I; or elles pleyest thou or deceivest thou me, that hast so woven me with thy resouns the hous of Dedalus, so entrelaced that it is unable to be unlaced; thou that otherwhyle entrest ther thou issest, and otherwhyle issest ther thou entrest, ne foldest thou nat togider, by replicacion of wordes, a maner wonderful cercle or environinge of the simplicitee devyne? For certes, a litel herbiform, whan thou bigunne at blisfulnesse, thou seydest that it is sovereign good; and seydest that it is set in sovereign God; and seydest that God himself is sovereign good; and that God is the fulle blisfulnesse; for which thou yave me as a covenable yift, that is to seyn, that no wight nis blisful but yif he be God also therwith. And seidest eek, that the forme of good is the substaunce of God and of blisfulnesse; & seidest, that thilke same oon is thilke same good, that is required & desired of alle the kinde of things. And thou proevedest, in disputinge, that God governeth alle the things of the world by the governements of bountee, and seydest, that alle things wolen obeyen to him; and seydest, that the nature of yvel nis nothing. And these things ne shewedest thou nat with none resouns ytaken fro withoute, but by proeves in cercles & hoomlich knowen; the whiche proeves drawn to himself hir feith and hir acord, everich of

hem of other.

**T**HANNE seyde she thus: I ne scorne thee nat, ne pleye, ne deceive thee; but I have shewed thee the thing that is grettest over alle things by the yift of God, that we whylom preyeden, for this is the forme of the devyne substaunce, that is swich that it ne slydeth nat into outterest foreine things, ne ne receiveth no straunge things in him; but right as Parmenides seyde in Greek of thilke devyne substaunce; he seyde thus: that Thilke devyne substaunce torneth the world and the moevable cercle of things, whyl thilke devyne substaunce kepeth itself withoute moevinge; that is to seyn, that it ne moeveth nevermo, and yit it moeveth alle othere things. But natheles, yif I have stired resouns that ne ben nat taken fro withoute the compas of thing of which we treten, but resouns that ben bistowed within that compas, ther nis nat why that thou sholdest mervellen; sin thou hast lerned by the sentence of Plato, that Nedes the wordes moten be cosines to the things of which they speken.

Metre XII.  
felix, qui potuit boni.

**B**LISFUL is that man that may seen the clere welle of good; blisful is he that may unbinden him fro the bondes of the hevny erthe. The poete of Trace, Orpheus, that whylom hadde right gret sorwe for the deeth of his wyf, after that he hadde maked, by his weeply songes, the wodes, moevable, to rennen; and hadde maked the riveres to stonden stille; & hadde maked the hertes and the hundes to joignen, dredeles, hir sydes to cruel lyouns, for to herkenen his songe; & hadde maked that the hare was nat agast of the hounde, which that was plesed by his songe: so, whan the mooste ardaunt love of his wif brende the entrailes of his brest, ne the songes that hadden overcomen alle things ne mighten nat aswage hir lord Orpheus, he pleynde him of the hevne goddes that weren cruel to him; he went him to the houses of helle. And there he temprede hise blaundisshinge songes by resowninge strenges, and spak and song in wepinge al that ever he hadde received and laved out of the noble welles of his moder Calliope the goddesse; and he song with as moche las he mighte of wepinge, and with as moche as love, that doubled his sorwe, mighte yeve him and techen him; and he commoevede the helle, & requered & bisoughte by swete preyere the lordes of sowles in helle, of relesinge; that is to seyn, to yilden him his wyf.